



USA HOCKEY NATIONAL BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

This USA Hockey National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure is to be used by USA Hockey to review applicants seeking participation in USA Hockey programs in positions that require a background check be conducted prior to the applicant being eligible for such position. Pursuant to the requirements of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, the USA Hockey Bylaws and the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, USA Hockey, through the procedure below, may deny or place limitations on any applicant's participation in any USA Hockey sanctioned events or programs if it finds that permitting an applicant with negative background check results is inconsistent with the stated purpose of USA Hockey's Bylaws, policies, and/or the USA Hockey SafeSport Program.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Confidentiality. All information and discussion related to a screening application must be kept confidential within the process of review of background screens as outlined below until a final determination is made by USA Hockey as to whether an applicant is deemed eligible or ineligible to participate.

Email Communications. Pursuant to USA Hockey's agreement with the national background screen vendor, National Center for Safety Initiatives ("NCSI"), and NCSI's standard protocol, communications between NCSI and applicant and/or USA Hockey and applicant will be via email at the address provided to NCSI by applicant during the screening application process.

Previous Background Screen Determinations by USA Hockey Affiliates. USA Hockey Affiliates shall submit all prior background screening determinations to USA Hockey for persons deemed ineligible within the Affiliate as a result of a background screen. Previous determinations that an applicant was eligible to participate in USA Hockey sanctioned events or programs does not guarantee future determinations of eligibility.

Screens from Other National Governing Bodies. At this time, NCSI cannot process a background screen conducted on an applicant on behalf of another Olympic National Governing Body.

Background Screen Results. The procedure below outlines how determinations are made following a background screen. As set forth more fully below, determinations may be that the applicant (i) is "clear" and eligible for to fulfill positions requiring a background screen, (ii) is clear with restrictions or conditions imposed (e.g. no driving minors or not eligible for a certain position, etc.), which means that an applicant is eligible for membership but must adhere to certain restrictions imposed as a condition of the applicant's membership, or (iii) is "declined," which means the applicant has a disqualifying condition in the applicant's background screen record (as further defined below) and is not eligible to fulfill positions requiring a background screen.

Flagged Screens. If an applicant's screen is "flagged," it means the applicant is ineligible, pending an appeal, to serve as a volunteer in any role requiring a background screen because the search determined the applicant has a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding (including dismissed charges), other than an adjudication of not guilty, or has a pending charge for any of the

following crimes, but not limited to:

- a. Any felony, defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one (1) year in jail or prison, regardless of how it's characterized by jurisdiction;
- b. Any misdemeanor involving:
 1. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, and public indecency;
 2. Any drug related offenses;
 3. Harm to a minor or vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
 4. Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving a deadly weapon and domestic violence);
 5. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, and/or threats;
 6. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief;
 7. Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect; and
 8. Any DUI/DWI in the last two (2) years, or two (2) or more DUIs/DWIs in the last five (5) years, based on the disposition date of the offense(s); and/or
- c. If the applicant is currently listed, or has ever been listed, on a sex offender registry or a similar database.

Background Screen Review Committee. The Background Screen Review Committee (“BSRC”) shall be comprised of twenty-one (21) qualified individual volunteers appointed by the President of USA Hockey. Members of the BSRC will be assigned in teams of three (3) members per panel with two alternates to (i) conduct an initial review of any background screen resulting in a flagged status (as defined below) to determine whether an applicant should be eligible, and (ii) conduct hearings and make determinations when an applicant has been denied eligibility based on flagged status. A member of the BSRC shall not serve on a hearing panel for an applicant in which the BSRC member was part of the panel that conducted the initial review. Panel members will communicate primarily via email, but may elect/agree to communicate by other means if necessary. Hearings will be held via telephone and/or video.

Screening Appeals Committee. The Screening Appeals Committee (“SAC”) shall be composed of five (5) persons appointed by the President of USA Hockey to decide appeals of applicants that have been denied eligibility following a hearing before the BSRC.

BACKGROUND SCREENING REVIEW PROCEDURE.

1. **Screening Vendor Review.** After the applicant submits to a background screen through NCSI, and as the circumstances warrant, NCSI either (i) directly notifies the applicant (via email) and USA Hockey (via direct database communication) of a Clear screen or (ii) sends the applicant a Pre-Adverse Action Notice indicating that either (a) NCSI needs more information to complete the screening process or (b) the screen results show a criminal record consistent with the flagged Screens criteria listed above and the applicant may contest the accuracy of the screening results directly with NCSI within five (5) business days. If the applicant successfully contests the accuracy within the five (5) business day period, then NCSI through its process will issue a Clear screen. If the applicant (a) does not contest the accuracy of the screen within the five (5) day period or (b) unsuccessfully contests the accuracy of the screen, NCSI will change the applicant's status to flagged, and will notify USA Hockey of the change in the applicant's status.

2. **Flagged Status.** If an application returns a result of flagged (as described above) through either the NCSI report, a self-disclosure response, or a state-specific supplemental search (as described below), USA Hockey will promptly refer the application to designated members (at least three (3)) of the BSRC, with a copy to the applicable Affiliate, junior league or ACHA representative(s). If the applicant was previously denied eligibility or was subject to restrictions or conditions that would carry over into the new screening period pursuant to this procedure, the application will go straight to appeal pursuant to Section 3, below. For all new flagged screens, the members of the BSRC will conduct an initial review of the screen's results, consider any feedback from the ACHA, Affiliate or junior league in which the applicant intends to participate, and will determine whether the applicant is eligible (Clear) or remains ineligible (flagged). The BSRC's panel of at least three (3) members, also referred to as "the Panel" or "the BSRC Panel" hereinafter, will use its best efforts to make its determination within five (5) business days of receipt of the background screen results.

a. If the applicant is deemed eligible by the BSRC, USA Hockey will set the applicant's status to Clear. USA Hockey will notify the applicant directly (via email) of the applicant's eligibility only if there are any restrictions and/or conditions to regarding the applicant's ability to participate. If the BSRC sets any such restrictions or conditions (e.g., not allowed to drive minors, not allowed to hold certain positions, etc.), USA Hockey will also notify the applicable Affiliate President, District Registrar and SafeSport Coordinator, or the junior league or ACHA representative(s) if applicable, of the restriction(s) with the expectation that the applicable Affiliate and program, or junior or ACHA team, shall require and enforce that the restriction(s) are followed according to the BSRC's direction. The applicant will not be able to participate in any role requiring a background screen in any USA Hockey sanctioned events or programs until the applicant acknowledges and accepts any identified restrictions and/or conditions via return email prior to participation in USA Hockey activities. Any violations of any restrictions or conditions imposed by the BSRC will be addressed pursuant to the disciplinary process of Bylaw 10.

b. If the applicant is deemed ineligible by the BSRC on initial review or the applicant was previously denied eligibility pursuant to this procedure or was subject to restrictions or conditions that would carry over into the new screening period, USA Hockey will cause an Adverse Action Letter to be sent to the applicant via email, advising that the

applicant has a flagged condition and will instruct the applicant on the procedure to request a hearing to contest the determination (as described below).

c. Self-Disclosures. As part of the application process for background screens with USA Hockey, applicants are required to answer certain questions regarding their background. Any self-disclosure response that meets USA Hockey's criteria for flagged screens (as contained herein) that does not otherwise show on the NCSI report will be set to flagged and processed pursuant to this Section 2. All adverse determinations of self-disclosed conduct can be contested pursuant to Section 3 below.

d. State-Specific Background Screen Requirements. Some states require supplemental documentation or background searches in addition to the USOPC-mandated background screen conducted by NCSI. Any conduct shown in a state-required screen that meets USA Hockey criteria for flagged screens will be flagged and processed pursuant to this Section 2 and that state's law. However, records within the past seven years which violate USA Hockey's screening criteria which are found on state specific screening documents, but not on NCSI, will first be sent to NCSI to reinvestigate. The screen will then be re-posted as "flagged" with a Pre-Adverse Action letter sent to the applicant. All adverse determinations made pursuant to this paragraph can be contested pursuant to Section 3 below.

e. Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse. In accordance with Federal law, the SafeSport Code, and the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook, any allegation of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse (as defined in the SafeSport Program Handbook) discovered by USA Hockey at any point in the background screen process will be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the "Center") and will be processed according to the Center's policies and procedures. USA Hockey will continue process the screen pursuant to this procedure, but the ultimate determination of eligibility will be within the jurisdiction of the Center, regardless of the determination made by the BSRC or the SAC.

f. If the time frame for exercising the right to contest a screening determination (fourteen (14) days from transmission of the Adverse Action Letter) has passed and the applicant has not properly exercised that right, the determination by the BSRC will be deemed final, the applicant's status will be set to Declined, and the applicant will be deemed ineligible to Participate in any role in in USA Hockey which requires a valid background screen.

3. Procedure to Contest a Screening Determination. The applicant will have fourteen (14) days from transmission of the Adverse Action Notice or Notice of Eligibility with Conditions to file a Statement of Appeal to the BSRC to contest the Adverse Action Notice or conditions imposed, c/o usahscreeningappeals@usahockey.org. USA Hockey will only accept electronic submissions.

a. The applicant may include with the Statement of Appeal any additional submissions the applicant deems necessary including, but not limited to:

- letters of reference;
- memorandums in support of eligibility; and

- court records, including police reports, sentencing documents, proof of completion of court order, etc.

b. The Statement of Appeal shall be no longer than ten (10) typewritten double spaced pages with a font size no smaller than twelve (12) point. Exhibits to support the Statement of Appeal may also be attached. Exhibits shall not be included in the ten (10) page limitation; however, exhibits shall only be included if they are non-duplicative (e.g., no more than three (3) personal reference letters) and necessary to explain why the applicant's appeal should be granted.

c. The BSRC will consider appeals from any applicants who receive an Adverse Action Notice or a Notice of Eligibility with Conditions for any, coach, official, administrator, or volunteer screened by NCSI as a condition of their eligibility for membership or participation within USA Hockey. Screening flags of USA Hockey employees to determine their eligibility for employment with USA Hockey shall be reviewed, and a decision shall be made, by USA Hockey's Executive Director with no right of appeal.

d. The designated BSRC Panel will review the applicant's submissions and schedule a telephonic and/or video hearing to take place no later than thirty (30) days of receipt of the Statement of Appeal by USA Hockey, although the applicant may waive a hearing and ask that the Panel make its determination solely on the applicant's submissions. At any hearing, the applicant shall be allowed up to ten (10) minutes to make a presentation to the Panel, followed by any questions from the Panel. At the time of the hearing, the applicant should be prepared to discuss:

- The factual basis for the flagged offenses;
- The role in USA Hockey the applicant intends to fill;
- The applicant's history in USA Hockey or other sport;
- How the offense has impacted the applicant and others;
- Whether the applicant has sought treatment or counseling; and
- How the applicant intends to use what the applicant has learned from the offense.

The Rules of Evidence in judicial proceedings shall not apply in the BSRC Panel's administrative hearing. The burden of proof shall be on the applicant challenging the initial determination of ineligibility or eligibility with conditions to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant should be eligible for participation within USA Hockey in a role that requires a background screen, or that any conditions imposed should be modified or removed, despite the existence of the reported disqualifying condition. The Panel will review the initial determination de novo and may affirm, reverse, or modify the determination as it deems appropriate in accordance with the factors below. The applicant may consult with legal counsel during the hearing, but legal counsel may not participate in the hearing itself. The Panel will make arrangements for a record of the proceedings. A copy of that record shall be provided to the applicant upon request, at the applicant's expense. All proceedings are confidential.

e. At the request of the applicant, but in the discretion of the Panel, the Panel shall use reasonable efforts to expedite the proceedings.

f. After the hearing, or upon consideration of the submissions alone at the request of the applicant, the Panel will determine eligibility by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

4. BSRC Panel Determination. In rendering its finding, each designated BSRC Panel shall consider the following:

- a. The legitimate interest of USA Hockey in providing a safe environment for all USA Hockey participants and other persons who attend USA Hockey sanctioned events;
- b. The seriousness of the criminal offense of the applicant, including the age of any victim(s) at the time of the offense;
- c. The time which has elapsed since the occurrence of the criminal offense or act
- d. The age of the applicant at the time of the criminal offense or act;
- e. The bearing, if any, the criminal offense or act has on the applicant's ability to perform the necessary functions of their role in USA Hockey;
- f. Any information produced by the applicant, or on behalf of the applicant, with respect to the applicant's rehabilitation and good conduct;
- g. Any voluntary restrictions on access proposed by the applicant;
- h. Any recommendation or information provided by the applicant's organization; and,
- i. Any other information, which in the determination of the designated BSRC Panel, would bear on whether or not the applicant should be eligible to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes in USA Hockey, or otherwise eligible for the position being sought.

5. Appeals Following BSRC Determination.

a. Upon the written appeal of any applicant whose determination of ineligibility has been upheld by the BSRC, or if the applicant wishes to appeal any restrictions imposed by the BSRC as a condition of eligibility, an appeal of such determination may be made to the SAC. A Statement of Appeal must be received by the SAC by email to usahscreeningappeals@usahockey.org within fourteen (14) days from email transmission of the BSRC determination that the applicant is ineligible or is eligible but subject to conditions. If a Statement of Appeal is not received by the SAC within the fourteen (14) day period, the BSRC determination shall be final.

b. The applicant may submit a new Statement of Appeal for consideration by the SAC, but any other documents may only be submitted if previously submitted to the BSRC. The Statement of Appeal shall be no longer than ten (10) typed double spaced pages with a font size no smaller than twelve (12) point and shall only address the issue of

whether the BSRC determination was made in an arbitrary or capricious manner or was not supported by the facts.

c. The record on appeal to the SAC will be compiled by USA Hockey and will consist of all documentation and correspondence considered by the BSRC, including, but not limited to: the applicant's NCSI background screen report, self-disclosure, or state-specific documentation or report (as applicable), the applicant's USA Hockey member records, any submissions presented to the BSRC by the applicant, the applicant's new Statement of Appeal to the SAC (if applicable), and any correspondence from the applicant to the BSRC, SAC, or USA Hockey. The applicant may request a copy of the record from USA Hockey prior to submitting a Statement of Appeal to the SAC by sending an email to usahscreeningappeals@usahockey.org. If the applicant does not request a copy of the record prior to submitting a Statement of Appeal, USA Hockey will send a copy of the record to the applicant upon receipt of the Statement of Appeal and will ask the applicant to confirm the record is accurate prior to sending the record to the SAC for review.

d. Each appeal shall be heard by no less than three (3) members of the SAC and decided by majority vote of the SAC members hearing the appeal.

e. The appeal to the SAC shall be decided based upon the written submissions only. There shall be no hearing. Only the evidence and theories presented to the BSRC shall be considered on appeal. The applicant shall bear the burden of proof that the BSRC determination was made in an arbitrary or capricious manner or was not supported by the facts. The SAC may affirm, reverse, remand or modify the BSRC's determination as it deems appropriate, consistent with standard of review above. The SAC shall decide any appeal and deliver a written decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of applicant's Statement of Appeal.

f. The decision of the SAC shall be final within USA Hockey's screening procedures and there shall be no further appeal.

6. Reporting of Decision. USA Hockey staff will communicate the BSRC or SAC panel's decision to the applicant, the applicant's Affiliate President, SafeSport Coordinator and applicable District Registrar, or to the appropriate junior league, ACHA representative or NCSI when applicable. If an applicant's participation is approved through their screen or by USA Hockey, then the applicant's record in the USA Hockey membership database shall signify a valid screen until the screen expires. Unless otherwise indicated in a BSRC determination or a SAC decision, USA Hockey will keep records of all adjudications and BSRC and SAC decisions approving of an applicant shall be upheld and binding in future screening determinations. However, all documents, correspondence, or recordings developed during prior background screen review processes or proceedings will be considered by the BSRC and the SAC should an applicant's background screen require subsequent review pursuant to this procedure.